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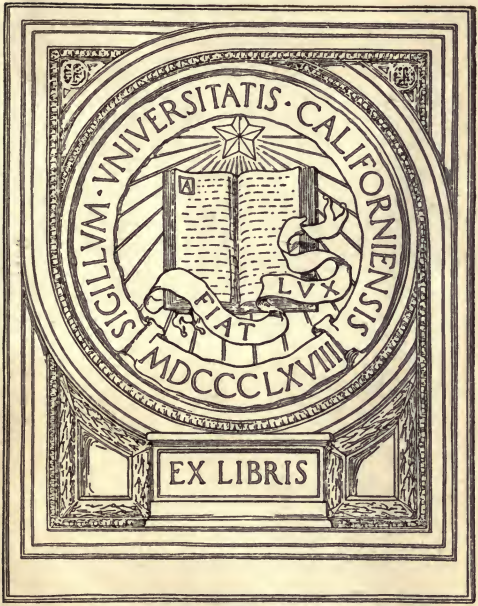

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Pierpon

AIRS OF PALESTINE.

AIRS OF PALESTINE

A

POEM

BY

J. PIERPONT ESQ.

AIRS OF PALESTINE;

A Poem:

BY JOHN PIERPONT, Esq.

I love to breathe, where Gilead sheds her balm;
I love to walk on Jordan's banks of palm;
I love to wet my foot in Hermon's dews;
I love the promptings of Isaiah's muse:
In Carmel's holy grots I'll court repose,
And deck my mossy couch with Sharon's deathless rose.

SECOND EDITION.

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY WELLS AND LILLY.

1817.

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WITHDRAWN

FROM N.Y.P.L.

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BE it remembered, That on this thirteenth day of November, in the forty-first year of the Independence of the United States of America, John Pierpont, Esquire, of the said District, hath deposited in this Office, the Title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the words following, to wit :—

"*Airs of Palestine; a Poem: by John Pierpont, Esquire.*

"I love to breathe, where Gilead sheds her balm;
"I love to walk on Jordan's banks of palm;
"I love to wet my foot in Hermon's dews;
"I love the promptings of Isaiah's muse:
"In Carmel's holy grots I'll court repose,
"And deck my mossy couch with Sharon's deathless rose."

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PHILIP MOORE,
Clerk of the District of Maryland.

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AIRS OF PALESTINE.

Summer's dun cloud, that, slowly rising, holds
The sweeping tempest in its rushing folds,
Though o'er the ridges of its thundering breast,
The King of Terrours lifts his lightning crest;
Pleas'd we behold, when those dark folds we find,
Fring'd with the golden light, that glows behind.
So, when one language bound the human race,
On Shinar's plain, round Babel's mighty base,
Gloomily rose the minister of wrath;
Dark was his frown, destructive was his path;
That tower was blasted by the touch of Heaven;
That bond was burst—that race asunder driven:
Yet, round the Avenger's brow, that frown'd above,
Play'd Mercy's beams—the lambent light of Love.
All was not lost, though busy Discord flung
Repulsive accents from each jarring tongue;
All was not lost; for Love one tie had twin'd,
And Mercy dropp'd it, to connect mankind:

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One tie, that winds, with soft and sweet control,
Its silken fibres round the yielding soul;
Binds man to man, sooths Passion's wildest strife,
And, through the mazy labyrinths of life,
Supplies a faithful clue, to lead the lone
And weary wanderer to his Father's throne.

That tie is Musick. How supreme her sway!
How lovely is the Power that all obey!
Dumb matter trembles at her thrilling shock;
Her voice is echo'd by the desert rock;
For her, the asp withholds the sting of death,
And bares his fangs, but to inhale her breath;
The lordly lion leaves his lonely lair,
And, crouching, listens when she treads the air;
And man, by wilder impulse driven to ill,
Is tamed, and led by this Enchantress still.
Who ne'er has felt her hand assuasive steal
Along his heart—That heart will never feel.
'Tis hers to chain the passions, sooth the soul,
To snatch the dagger, and to dash the bowl
From Murder's hand; to smooth the couch of Care,
Extract the thorns, and scatter roses there;
Of Pain's hot brow, to still the bounding throb,
Despair's long sigh, and Grief's convulsive sob.

How vast her empire! Turn through earth, through air,
Your aching eye, you find her subjects there;
Nor is the throne of heaven above her spell,
Nor yet beneath it is the host of hell.

To her, Religion owes her holiest flame:
Her eye looks heaven-ward, for from heaven she came.
And when Religion's mild and genial ray,
Around the frozen heart begins to play,
Musick's soft breath falls on the quivering light;
The fire is kindled, and the flame is bright;
And that cold mass, by either power assail'd,
Is warm'd—made liquid—and to heaven exhal'd.

Here let us pause:—the opening prospect view:—
How fresh this mountain air!—how soft the blue,
That throws its mantle o'er the length'ning scene!
Those waving groves—those vales of living green—
Those yellow fields—that lake's cerulean face,
That meets, with curling smiles, the cool embrace
Of roaring torrents, lull'd by her to rest;—
That white cloud, melting on the mountain's breast:
How the wide landscape laughs upon the sky!
How rich the light that gives it to the eye!

Where lies our path?—though many a vista call,
We may admire, but cannot tread them all.
Where lies our path!—a poet, and inquire
What hills, what vales, what streams become the lyre?
See, there Parnassus lifts his head of snow;
See at his foot, the cool Cephissus flow;
There Ossa rises; there Olympus towers;
Between them, Tempe breathes in beds of flowers,
Forever verdant; and there Peneus glides
Through laurels, whispering on his shady sides.
Your theme is Musick:—Yonder rolls the wave,
Where dolphins snatch'd Arion from his grave,
Enchanted by his lyre:—Cithæron's shade
Is yonder seen, where first Amphion play'd
Those potent airs, that, from the yielding earth,
Charm'd stones around him, and gave cities birth.
And fast by Hæmus, Thracian Hebrus creeps
O'er golden sands, and still for Orpheus weeps,
Whose gory head, borne by the stream along,
Was still melodious, and expired in song.
There Nereids sing, the Triton winds his shell;
There be thy path—for there the Muses dwell.

No, no—a lonelier, lovelier path be mine:
Greece, and her charms, I leave, for Palestine.

There, purer streams through happier valleys flow,
And sweeter flowers on holier mountains blow.
I love to breathe where Gilead sheds her balm;
I love to walk on Jordan's banks of palm;
I love to wet my foot in Hermon's dews;
I love the promptings of Isaiah's muse:
In Carmel's holy grots I'll court repose,
And deck my mossy couch, with Sharon's deathless rose.

Here arching vines their leafy banner spread,
Shake their green shields, and purple odours shed;
At once repelling Syria's burning ray,
And breathing freshness on the sultry day.
Here the wild bee suspends her murmuring wing,
Pants on the rock, or sips the silver spring;
And here—as musing on my theme divine,
I gather flowers to bloom along my line,
And hang my garland in festoons around,
Enwreath'd with clusters, and with tendrils bound;
And fondly, warmly, humbly hope the Power,
That gave perfumes and beauty to the flower,
Drew living water from this rocky shrine,
Purpled the clustering honours of the vine,

And led me, lost in devious mazes, hither,
To weave a garland, will not let it wither :—
Wond'ring, I listen to the strain sublime,
That flows, all freshly, down the stream of time,
Wafted in grand simplicity along,
The undying breath, the very soul of song.
Down that long vale of years are sweetly roll'd
The mingled voices of the bards of old;
Melodious voices! bards of brightest fire!
Where each is warm, how melting is the quire!
Yet, though so blended is the concert blest,
Some master tones are heard above the rest.

O'er the cleft sea, the storm in fury rides:
Israel is safe, and Egypt tempts the tides:
Her host, descending, meets a wat'ry grave,
And o'er her monarch rolls the refluent wave.
The storm is hush'd: the billows foam no more,
But sink in smiles :—there's musick on the shore.
On the wide waste of waters, dies that air
Unheard; for all is death and coldness there.
But see! the robe that brooding Silence throws
O'er Shur reclining in profound repose,
Is rent, and scattered, by the burst of praise,

That swells the song th' astonish'd Hebrews raise.
That rending anthem on the wild was flung,
From Miriam's timbrel and from Moses' tongue:[1]
The first to Liberty that e'er was sung.

But if, when joy and gratitude inspire,
Such high-ton'd triumph walks along the lyre,
What are its breathings, when pale Sorrow flings
Her tearful touches o'er its trembling strings?

At Nebo's base, that mighty bard resigns
His life and empire, in prophetick lines.[2]—
Heaven, all attention, round the poet bends,
And conscious earth, as when the dew descends,
Or showers as gentle, feels her young buds swell,
Her herbs shoot greener, at that fond farewell.
Rich is the song, though mournfully it flows:
And as that harp, which God alone bestows,
Is swept in concert with that sinking breath,
Its cold chords shrink, as from the touch of death.
It *was* the touch of death!—Sweet be thy slumbers,
Harp of the prophet! but those holy numbers,
That death-denoting, monitory moan,
Shall live, till Nature heaves her dying groan.

From Pisgah's top his eye the prophet threw,
O'er Jordan's wave, where Canaan met his view.
His sunny mantle, and his hoary locks
Shone, like the robe of Winter, on the rocks.
Where is that mantle ?—Melted into air.
Where is the prophet ?—God can tell thee where.

So, on the brow of some romantick height,
A fleecy cloud hangs hov'ring in the light,
Fit couch for angels ; which while yet we view,
'Tis lost to earth, and all around is blue.

Whose veteran arm, already taught to urge
The battle stream, and roll its darkest surge,
Hangs over Jericho's devoted towers,[3]
And, like the storm o'er Sodom, redly lowers ?
The moon can answer ; for she heard his tongue,
And cold and pale o'er Ajalon she hung.[4]
The sun can tell :—O'er Gibeon's vale of blood,
Curving their beamy necks, his coursers stood,
Held by that hero's arm, to light his wrath,
And roll their glorious eyes upon his crimson path.
What mine, exploding, rends that smoking ground ?
What earthquake spreads those smouldering ruins round ?

The sons of Levi, round that city, bear
The ark of God, their consecrated care,
And, in rude concert, each returning morn,
Blow the long trump, and wind the curling horn.
No blackening thunder smok'd along the wall:
No earthquake shook it:—Musick wrought its fall.

The reverend hermit, who from earth retires,
Freezes to love's, to melt in holier fires,
And builds on Libanus his humble shed,[5]
Beneath the waving cedars of his head;—
Year after year, with brighter views revolving,
Doubt after doubt in stronger hopes dissolving;—
Though neither pipe, nor voice, nor organ's swell,
Disturb the silence of his lonely cell;
Yet hears enough, had nought been heard before,
To wake a holy awe, and teach him to adore.
For, ere the day with orisons he closes,
Ere on his flinty couch his head reposes,
A couch more downy in the hermit's sight,
Than beds of roses to the Sybarite;
As lone he muses on those naked rocks,
Heaven's last light blushing on his silver locks,
Amid the deep'ning shades of that wild mountain,
He hears the burst of many a mossy fountain,

Whose crystal rills in pure embraces mingle,
And dash, and sparkle down the leafy dingle,
There lose their liquid notes:—with grateful glow,
The hermit listens, as the waters flow,
And says there's musick in that mountain stream,
The storm beneath him, and the eagle's scream.

There lives around that solitary man,
The tameless musick, that with time began;
Airs of the Power, that bids the tempest roar,
The cedar bow, the royal eagle soar;
The mighty Power, by whom those rocks were pil'd,
Who moves unseen, and murmurs thro' the wild.
What countless chords does that dread Being strike!
Various their tone, but all divine alike:
'Tis Mercy now, in balmy softness stealing;
'Tis Anger now, the Mighty One revealing;
There, 'tis a string that sooths with slow vibration,
And here, a burst that shakes the whole creation.

By Heaven forewarn'd, his hunted life to save,
Behold Elijah stands by Horeb's cave;
Griev'd that the God, for whom he'd warmly striven,
Should see his servants into exile driven,

His words neglected, by those servants spoken,
His prophets murdered, and his altars broken.
His bleeding heart a soothing strain requires:
He hears it:—softer than Æolian lyres,
"A still, small voice," like Zephyr's dying sighs,
Steals on his ear:—he may not lift his eyes,
But o'er his face his flowing mantle flings,
And hears a whisper, from the King of Kings.[6]

Yet, from that very cave, from Horeb's side,
Where spreads a desert prospect, wild and wide,
The prophet sees, with reverential dread,
Dark Sinai rear his thunder-blasted head;
Where erst was pour'd on trembling Israel's ear,
A stormier peal, that Moses quak'd to hear.
In what tremendous pomp Jehovah shone,
When on that mount he fix'd his burning throne![7]
Thick, round its base, a shuddering gloom was flung
Black, on its breast, a thundercloud was hung:
Bright, through that blackness, arrowy lightnings
came,
Shot from the glowing vail, that wrapp'd its head in
flame.
And when that quaking mount the Eternal trod,
Scorch'd by the foot of the descending God,

Then, blasts of unseen trumpets, long and loud,
Swelled by the breath of whirlwinds, rent the cloud,
And Death and Terrour stalk'd, beneath that smoky
shroud.

Seest thou that shepherd boy, of features fair,
Of eye serene, and brightly flowing hair,
That leans, in thoughtful posture, on his crook,
And, statue-like, pores o'er the pebbly brook?
Yes: and why stands he there, in stupor cold?
Why not pursue those wanderers from his fold?
Or, mid the playful children of his flocks,
Toss his light limbs, and shake his amber locks,
Rather than idly gaze upon the stream?—
That boy is lost in a poetick dream:
And, while his eye follows the wave along,
His soul expatiates in the realms of song.
For oft, where yonder grassy hills recede,
I've heard that shepherd tune his rustick reed;
And then, such sweetness from his fingers stole,
I knew that Musick had possessed his soul.
Oft, in her temple, shall the votary bow,
Oft, at her altar, breathe his ardent vow,
And oft suspend, along her coral walls,
The proudest trophies that adorn her halls.

Even now, the heralds of his monarch tear
The son of Jesse from his fleecy care,[8]
And to the hall the ruddy minstrel bring,
Where sits a being, that was once a king.
Still, on his brow the crown of Israel gleams,
And cringing courtiers still adore its beams,
Though the bright circle throws no light divine,
But rays of hell, that melt it while they shine.

As the young harper tries each quivering wire,
It leaps and sparkles with prophetick fire,
And, with the kindling song, the kindling rays
Around his fingers tremulously blaze,
Till the whole hall, like those blest fields above,
Glows with the light of melody and love.

Soon as the foaming demon hears that psalm,
Heaven on his memory bursts, and Eden's balm:
He sees the dawnings of too bright a sky;
Detects the angel in the poet's eye;
With grasp convulsive, rends his matted hair;
Through his strain'd eye-balls shoots a fiend-like glare;
And flies, with shrieks of agony, that hall,
The throne of Israel, and the breast of Saul;

Exil'd to roam, or, in infernal pains.
To seek a refuge from that shepherd's strains.

The night was moonless:—Judah's shepherds kept
Their starlight watch: their flocks around them slept.[9]
To heaven's blue fields their wakeful eyes were turn'd,
And to the fires that there eternal burn'd.
Those azure regions had been peopled long,
With Fancy's children, by the sons of song:
And there, the simple shepherd, conning o'er
His humble pittance of Chaldean lore,
Saw, in the stillness of a starry night,
The Swan and Eagle wing their silent flight;[10]
And, from their spangled pinions, as they flew,
On Israel's vales of verdure shower the dew:
Saw there, the brilliant gems, that nightly flare,
In the thin mist of Berenicé's hair;
And there, Boötes roll his lucid wain,
On sparkling wheels, along the ethereal plain;
And there, the Pleiades, in tuneful gyre,
Pursue forever the star-studded Lyre;
And there, with bickering lash, heaven's Charioteer
Urge round the Cynosure his bright career.

While thus the shepherds watch'd the host of
night,
O'er heaven's blue concave flash'd a sudden light.
The unrolling glory spread its folds divine,
O'er the green hills and vales of Palestine;
And lo! descending angels, hovering there,
Stretch'd their loose wings, and in the purple air,
Hung o'er the sleepless guardians of the fold:—
When that high anthem, clear, and strong, and bold
On wavy paths of trembling ether ran:
"Glory to God;—benevolence to man;—
Peace to the world:"—and in full concert came,
From silver tubes, and harps of golden frame,
The loud and sweet response, whose choral strains
Lingered and languished on Judea's plains.
Yon living lamps, charm'd from their chambers blue,
By airs so heavenly, from the skies withdrew:
All?—all, but one, that hung and burn'd alone,
And with mild lustre over Bethlehem shone.
Chaldea's sages saw that orb afar,
Glow unextinguished;—'twas Salvation's Star.

Hear'st thou that solemn symphony, that swells
And echoes through Philippi's gloomy cells?

From vault to vault the heavy notes rebound,
And granite rocks reverberate the sound.
The wretch, who long, in dungeons cold and dank,
Had shook his fetters, that their iron clank
Might break the grave-like silence of that prison,
On which the Star of Hope had never risen;
Then sunk in slumbers, by despair opprest,
And dream'd of freedom in his broken rest;
Wakes at the musick of those mellow strains,
Thinks it some spirit, and forgets his chains.
'Tis Paul and Silas; who, at midnight, pay
To Him of Nazareth, a grateful lay.
Soon is that anthem wafted to the skies:
An angel bears it, and a God replies.
With thundering crash, are burst bolts, bars and locks;
Rent are their chains, and shivered are their stocks;[11]
Strong tides of light gush through the yielding doors,
Glance on the walls, and flash along the floors.
Fix'd in dismay, the shuddering keepers gaze
At the bright suns, on Freedom's brow that blaze,
As she descends to break the prisoners' bars,
Whose musick charmed her from her kindred stars.

'Tis night again: for Musick loves to steal
Abroad at night; when all her subjects kneel,
In more profound devotion, at her throne:
And, at that sober hour, she'll sit alone,
Upon a bank, by her sequestered cell,
And breathe her sorrows through her wreathed shell.
Again 'tis night—the diamond lights on high,
Burn bright, and dance harmonious through the sky;
And Silence leads her downy footed hours,
Round Sion's hill, and Salem's holy towers.
The Lord of Life, with his few faithful friends,
Drown'd in mute sorrow, down that hill descends.
They cross the stream that bathes its foot, and dashes
Around the tomb, where sleep a monarch's ashes;[12]
And climb the steep, where oft the midnight air
Received the Sufferer's solitary prayer.
There, in dark bowers imbosomed, Jesus flings
His hand celestial o'er prophetick strings;
Displays his purple robe, his bosom gory,
His crown of thorns, his cross, his future glory:—
And, while the group, each hallowed accent gleaning,
On pilgrim's staff, in pensive posture leaning—
Their reverend beards, that sweep their bosoms, wet
With the chill dews of shady Olivet—

Wonder and weep, they pour the song of sorrow,[12]
With their lov'd Lord, whose death shall shroud the morrow.
Heavens! what a strain was that! those matchless tones,
That ravish "Princedoms, Dominations, Thrones;"
That, heard on high, had hush'd those peals of praise,
That seraphs swell, and harping angels raise,
Soft, as the wave from Siloa's fount that flows,
Through the drear silence of the mountain rose.
How sad the Saviour's song! how sweet! how holy!
The last he sung on earth:—how melancholy!
Along the valley sweep the expiring notes:
On Kedron's wave the melting musick floats:
From her blue arch, the lamp of evening flings
Her mellow lustre, as the Saviour sings:
The moon above, the wave beneath is still,
And light and musick mingle on the hill.

The glittering guard, whose viewless ranks invest
The brook's green margin, and the mountain's crest,
Catch that unearthly song, and soar away,
Leave this dark orb, for fields of endless day,
And round th' Eternal's throne, on buoyant pinions play.

Ye glowing seraphs, that enchanted swim,
In seas of rapture, as ye tune the hymn
Ye bore from earth—O say, ye choral quires,
Why in such haste to wake your golden lyres?
Why, like a flattering, like a fleeting dream,
Leave that lone mountain, and that silent stream?
Say, could not then the "Man of Sorrows" claim
Your shield of adamant, your sword of flame?—
Hell forc'd a smile, at your retiring wing,
And man was left—to crucify your King.

But must no other sweets perfume my wreath,
Than Carmel's hill and Sharon's valley breathe?
Are holy airs borne only through the skies,
Where Sinai thunders, and where Horeb sighs?
And move they only o'er Arabia's sea,
Bethesda's pool, the lake of Galilee?
And does the hand that bids Judea bloom,
Deny its blossoms to the desert's gloom?
No:—turn thine eye, in visionary glance,
To scenes beyond old Ocean's blue expanse,
Where vast La Plata rolls his weight along,
Through worlds unknown to science and to song,
And, sweeping proudly o'er his boundless plain,
Repels the foaming billows of the main.

Let Fancy lap thee in Paraguay's bowers,
And scatter round thee Nature's wildest flowers:
For Nature there, since first her opening eye
Hail'd the bright orb her Father hung on high,
Still, on her bosom wears the enamelled vest,
That bloom'd and budded on her infant breast;
Still, to the sportive breeze that round her blows,
Turns her warm cheek, her unshorn tresses throws;
With grateful hand her treasur'd balm bequeaths,
For every sigh the enamour'd rover breathes,
And even smiles to feel the flutterer sip
The virgin dew that cools her rosy lip.
There, through the clouds, stupendous mountains rise,
And lift their icy foreheads to the skies;
There, blooming valleys and secure retreats
Bathe all thy senses in voluptuous sweets:
Reclining there, beneath a bending tree,
Fraught with the fragrant labours of the bee,
Admire, with me, the birds of varied hue,
That hang, like flowers of orange and of blue,
Among the broad magnolia's cups of snow,
Quaffing the perfumes, from those cups that flow.

But, is all peace, beneath the mountain shade?
Do Love and Mercy haunt that sunny glade,

And sweetly rest upon that lovely shore,
When light retires, and nature smiles no more?
No:—there, at midnight, the hoarse tiger growls:
There, the gaunt wolf sits on his rock, and howls:
And there, in painted pomp, the yelling Indian
prowls.

Round the bold front of yon projecting cliff,
Shoots, on white wings, the missionary's skiff,
And, walking steadily along the tide,
Seems, like a phantom, o'er the wave to glide,
Unfolding to the breeze her light cymarr,
And bearing on her breast the Apostolick star.
That brilliant orb the bless'd Redeemer hurl'd,
From his pierc'd hand, ere he forsook the world.
Lanch'd by that hand, the sphere, divinely bright,
Has left, on eastern clouds, its path of light,
And, in a radiant curve, descends to bless
Parana's wave, Paraguay's wilderness.
See! it has check'd its lucid course, and now
Lights on the intrepid Jesuit's humble prow,[14]
Brightens his sail with its celestial glow,
And gilds the emerald wave, that rolls below.

Lo, at the stern, the priest of Jesus rears
His reverend front, plough'd by the share of years.
He takes his harp:—the spirits of the air
Breathe on his brow, and interweave his hair,
In silky flexure, with the sounding strings:—
And hark!—the holy missionary sings.
'Tis the Gregorean chant:—with him unites,
On either hand, his quire of neophytes,
While the boat cleaves its liquid path along,
And waters, woods, and winds protract the song.

Those unknown strains the forest war-whoop hush:
Huntsmen and warriours from their cabins rush,
Heed not the foe, that yells defiance nigh,
See not the deer, that dashes wildly by,
Drop from their hand the bow and rattling quiver,
Crowd to the shore, and plunge into the river,
Breast the green waves, the enchanted bark that toss,
Leap o'er her sides, and kneel before the cross:

Hear yon poetick pilgrim of the west,
Chant Musick's praise, and to her power attest.[15]
Who now, in Florida's untrodden woods,
Bedecks, with vines of jessamine, her floods,

And flowery bridges o'er them loosely throws;—
Who hangs the canvass where Atala glows,
On the live oak, in floating drapery shrouded,
That like a mountain rises, lightly clouded;—
Who, for the son of Outalissi, twines,
Beneath the shade of ever whispering pines,
A funeral wreath, to bloom upon the moss,
That Time already sprinkles on the cross,
Rais'd o'er the grave, where his young virgin sleeps,
And Superstition o'er her victim weeps;—
Whom now, the silence of the dead surrounds,
Among Scioto's monumental mounds;
Save that, at times, the musing pilgrim hears
A crumbling oak fall with the weight of years,
To swell the mass, that Time and Ruin throw,
O'er chalky bones, that mouldering lie below,
By virtues unembalm'd, unstain'd by crimes,
Lost in those towering tombs of other times;
For where no bard has cherish'd Virtue's flame,
No ashes sleep in the warm sun of Fame.—
With sacred lore, this traveller beguiles
His weary way, while o'er him Fancy smiles.
Whether he kneels in venerable groves,
Or through the wide and green savanna roves,

His heart leaps lightly on each breeze, that bears
The faintest cadence of Idumea's airs.

Now, he recalls the lamentable wail,
That pierc'd the shades of Rama's palmy vale[16]
When Murder struck, thron'd on an infant's bier,
A note, for Satan's, and for Herod's ear.
Now, on a bank, o'erhung with waving wood,
Whose falling leaves flit o'er Ohio's flood,
The pilgrim stands; and o'er his memory rushes
The mingled tide of tears, and blood, that gushes
Along the valleys, where his childhood stray'd,
And round the temples where his fathers pray'd.
How fondly then, from all but Hope exil'd,
To Zion's wo recurs Religion's child!
He sees the tear of Judah's captive daughters
Mingle, in silent flow, with Babel's waters;
While Salem's harp, by patriot pride unstrung,
Wrapp'd in the mist, that o'er the river hung,
Felt but the breeze, that wanton'd o'er the billow,
And the long, sweeping fingers of the willow.

And could not Musick sooth the captive's wo?—
But should that harp be strung for Judah's foe?

While thus the enthusiast roams along the stream,
Balanc'd between a revery and a dream,
Backward he springs: and, through his bounding heart,
The cold and curdling poison seems to dart.
For, in the leaves, beneath a quivering brake,
Spinning his death-note, lies a coiling snake,
Just in the act, with greenly venom'd fangs,
To strike the foot, that heedless o'er him hangs.
Bloated with rage, on spiral folds he rides;
His rough scales shiver on his spreading sides;
Dusky and dim his glossy neck becomes,
And freezing poisons thicken on his gums;
His parch'd and hissing throat breathes hot and dry;
A spark of hell lies burning on his eye:
While, like a vapour, o'er his writhing rings,
Whirls his light tail, that threatens while it sings.

Soon as dumb Fear removes her icy fingers
From off the heart, where gazing wonder lingers,
The pilgrim, shrinking from a doubtful fight,
Aware of danger, too, in sudden flight,
From his soft flute throws Musick's air around,
And meets his foe, upon enchanted ground.

See! as the plaintive melody is flung,
The lightning flash fades on the serpent's tongue;
The uncoiling reptile o'er each shining fold
Throws changeful clouds of azure, green and gold:
A softer lustre twinkles in his eye;
His neck is burnished with a glossier dye;
His slippery scales grow smoother to the sight,
And his relaxing circles roll in light.—
Slowly the charm retires:—with waving sides,
Along its track the graceful listner glides;
While Musick throws her silver cloud around,
And bears her votary off, in magick folds of sound.

On Arno's bosom, as he calmly flows,
And his cool arms round Vallombrosa throws,
Rolling his crystal tide through classick vales,
Alone,—at night,—the Italian boatman sails.
High o'er Mont Alto walks, in maiden pride,
Night's queen:—he sees her image on that tide,
Now, ride the wave that curls its infant crest,
Around his prow, then rippling sinks to rest;
Now, glittering dance around his eddying oar,
Whose every sweep is echoed from the shore;
Now, far before him, on a liquid bed
Of waveless water, rest her radiant head.

How mild the empire of that virgin queen!
How dark the mountain's shade! how still the scene!
Hush'd by her silver sceptre, zephyrs sleep
On dewy leaves, that overhang the deep,
Nor dare to whisper through the boughs, nor stir
The valley's willow, nor the mountain's fir,
Nor make the pale and breathless aspen quiver,
Nor brush, with ruffling wing, that glassy river.

Hark!—'tis a convent's bell:—its midnight chime.
For musick measures even the march of Time:—
O'er bending trees, that fringe the distant shore,
Gray turrets rise:—the eye can catch no more.
The boatman, listening to the tolling bell,
Suspends his oar:—a low and solemn swell,
From the deep shade, that round the cloister lies,
Rolls through the air, and on the water dies.
What melting song wakes the cold ear of Night?
A funeral dirge, that pale nuns, rob'd in white,
Chant round a sister's dark and narrow bed,
To charm the parting spirit of the dead.
Triumphant is the spell! with raptur'd ear,
That uncaged spirit hovering lingers near;—

Why should she mount? why pant for brighter bliss,
A lovelier scene, a sweeter song, than this!

On Caledonia's hills, the ruddy morn
Breathes fresh:—the huntsman winds his clamorous horn.
The youthful minstrel from his pallet springs,
Seizes his harp, and tunes its slumbering strings.
Lark-like he mounts o'er gray rocks, thunder-riven,
Lark-like he cleaves the white mist, tempest-driven,
And lark-like carols, as the cliff he climbs,
Whose oaks were vocal with his earliest rhymes.
With airy foot he treads that giddy height;
His heart all rapture, and his eye all light;
His voice all melody, his yellow hair
Floating and dancing on the mountain air,
Shaking from its loose folds the liquid pearls,
That gather clustering on his golden curls;—
And, for a moment, gazes on a scene,
Ting'd with deep shade, dim gold, and brightening green;
Then plays a mournful prelude, while the star
Of morning fades:—but when heaven's gates unbar,

And on the world a tide of glory rushes,
Burns on the hill, and down the valley blushes;
The mountain bard in livelier numbers sings,
While sunbeams warm and gild the conscious strings,
And his young bosom feels the enchantment strong,
Of light, and joy, and minstrelsy, and song.

From rising morn, the tuneful stripling roves,
Through smiling valleys and religious groves;
Hears there, the flickering blackbird strain his throat,
Here, the lone turtle pour her mournful note,
Till night descends, and round the wanderer flings
The dew drops dripping from her dusky wings.
Far from his native vale, and humble shed,
By nature's smiles, and nature's musick led,
This child of melody has thoughtless stray'd,
Till darkness wraps him in her deep'ning shade.
The scene he smil'd on, when array'd in light,
Now lowers around him with the frown of night.

With weary foot the nearest height he climbs,
Crown'd with huge oaks, giants of other times;
Who feel, but fear not autumn's breath, and cast
Their summer robes upon the roaring blast,

And glorying in their majesty of form,
Toss their old arms, and challenge every storm.
Below him, Ocean rolls :—deep in a wood,
Built on a rock, and frowning o'er the flood,
Like the dark Cyclops of Trinacria's isle,
Rises an old and venerable pile.
Gothick its structure ; once a cross it bore,
And pilgrims throng'd to hail it and adore.
Mitres and crosiers awed the trembling friar,
The solemn organ led the chanting quire,
When in those vaults the midnight dirge was sung,
And o'er the dead, a *requiescat* rung.—
Now, all is still :—the midnight anthem hush'd :-
The cross is crumbled, and the crosier crush'd.
And *is* all still ?—No : round those ruin'd altars,
With feeble foot as our musician falters,
Faint, weary, lost, benighted, and alone,
He sinks, all trembling, on the threshold stone.
Here, nameless fears the young enthusiast chill :
They're superstitious, but religious still.
He hears the sullen murmur of the seas,
That tumble round the stormy Orcades,
Or, deep beneath him, burst with boundless roar,
Their sparkling surges on that savage shore ;

And thinks a spirit rolls the weltering waves
Through rifted rocks, and hollow rumbling caves.

Round the dark windows clasping ivy clings,
Twines round the porch, and in the sea-breeze
swings;
Its green leaves rustle :—heavy winds arise :
The low cells echo, and the dark hall sighs.
Is that some demon's shriek, so loud and shrill,
Whose flapping robes sweep o'er the stormy hill?
No—'tis the mountain blast, that nightly rages,
Around those walls, gray with the moss of ages.
Is that a ghost's red eye, beneath his shroud?
No—'tis a star that glimmers through a cloud.
Is that a lamp sepulchral, whose pale light
Shines in yon vault, before a spectre white?
No—'tis a meteor, swimming through the hall,
Or glow-worm, burning greenly on the wall.
What mighty organ swells its deepest tone,
And sighing heaves a low, funereal moan,
That murmurs through the cemetery's glooms,
And throws a deadlier horrour round its tombs?
Sure, some dread spirit o'er the keys presides!
The same that lifts these darkly thundering tides;

Or, homeless, shivers o'er an unclosed grave;
Or shrieking, off at sea, bestrides the white-maned
wave.

Yes!—'tis some Spirit that those skies deforms,
And wraps in billowy clouds that hill of storms.
Yes:—'tis a Spirit in those vaults that dwells,
Illumes that hall, and murmurs in those cells.
Yes:—'tis *some* Spirit on the blast that rides,
And wakes the eternal tumult of the tides.
That Spirit broke the poet's morning dream,
Led him o'er woody hill and babbling stream,
Lur'd his young foot to every vale that rung,
And charm'd his ear in every bird that sung;
With various concerts cheer'd his hours of light,
But kept the mightiest in reserve till night;
Then, thron'd in darkness, peal'd that wildest air,
Froze his whole soul, and chain'd the listner there.

That Mighty Spirit once from Teman came:
Clouds were his chariot, and his coursers flame.[17]
Bow'd the perpetual hills:—the rivers fled:—
Green Ocean trembled to his deepest bed:—
Earth shrunk aghast:—eternal mountains burn'd,
And his red axle thunder'd as it turn'd.

O! Thou Dread Spirit! Being's End and Source!
O! check thy chariot in its fervid course.
Bend from thy throne of darkness and of fire,
And with one smile immortalize our lyre.
Amid the cloudy lustre of thy throne,
Though wreathy tubes, unheard on earth, are blown,
Swelling one ceaseless song of praise to thee,
Eternal Author of Eternity!
Still *hast* thou stoop'd to hear a shepherd play,
To prompt his measures, and approve his lay.
Hast thou grown old, Thou, who for ever livest!
Hast thou forgotten, Thou, who memory givest!
How, on the day thine ark, with loud acclaim,
From Zion's hill to Mount Moriah came,
Beneath the wings of Cherubim to rest,
In a rich vail of Tyrian purple drest;
When harps and cymbals join'd in echoing clang,
When psalteries tinkled, and when trumpets rang,
And white rob'd Levites round thine altar sang;
Thou didst descend, and, rolling through the crowd,
Inshrine thine ark and altar in thy shroud,
And fill the temple with thy mantling cloud.[18]
And now, Almighty Father, well we know,
When humble strains from grateful bosoms flow,

Those humble strains grow richer as they rise,
And shed a balmier freshness on the skies.

What though no Cherubim are here display'd,
No gilded walls, no cedar colonnade,
No crimson curtains hang around our quire,
Wrought by the ingenious artisan of Tyre;
No doors of fir on golden hinges turn;
No spicy gums in golden censers burn;
No frankincense, in rising volumes, shrouds
The fretted roof in aromatick clouds;
No royal minstrel, from his ivory throne,
Gives thee his father's numbers or his own;—
If humble love, if gratitude inspire,
Our strain shall silence even the temple's quire,
And rival Michael's trump, nor yield to Gabriel's lyre.

In what rich harmony, what polished lays,
Should man address thy throne, when Nature pays
Her wild, her tuneful tribute to the sky!
Yes, Lord, she sings thee, but she knows not why.
The fountain's gush, the long resounding shore,
The zephyr's whisper, and the tempest's roar,

The rustling leaf, in autumn's fading woods,
The wintry storm, the rush of vernal floods,
The summer bower, by cooling breezes fann'd,
The torrent's fall, by dancing rainbows spann'd,
The streamlet, gurgling through its rocky glen,
The long grass, sighing o'er the graves of men,
The bird that crests yon dew-bespangled tree,
Shakes his bright plumes, and trills his descant free,
The scorching bolt, that from thine armoury hurl'd,
Burns its red path, and cleaves a shrinking world;
All these are musick to Religion's ear:—
Musick, thy hand awakes, for man to hear.
Thy hand invested in their azure robes,
Thy breath made buoyant yonder circling globes,
That bound and blaze along the elastick wires,
That viewless vibrate on celestial lyres,
And in that high and radiant concave tremble,
Beneath whose dome adoring hosts assemble,
To catch the notes, from those bright spheres that flow,
Which mortals dream of, but which angels know.

Before thy throne, three sister Graces kneel;
Their holy influence let our bosoms feel!

Faith, that with smiles lights up our dying eyes;
Hope, that directs them to the opening skies;
And Charity,[19] the loveliest of the three,
That can assimilate a worm to thee.
For her our organ breathes; to her we pay
The heart-felt homage of an humble lay;
And while to her symphonious chords we string,
And Silence listens while to her we sing,
While round thine altar swells our evening song,
And vaulted roofs the dying notes prolong,
The strain we pour to her, wilt thou approve,
For Love is Charity, and Thou art Love.

NOTES.

NOTES.

[1] That rending anthem on the wild was flung,
From Miriam's timbrel and from Moses' tongue.

For the song of Moses, on this occasion, see Exodus xv. 1—22.

[2] At Nebo's base, that mighty bard resigns
His life and empire, in prophetick lines.

See the whole of the pathetick and eloquent valedictory address of Moses to the Israelites, in the xxxii. chapter of Deuteronomy, from the beginning to the 43d verse. His death, and other events here mentioned, follow in regular course.

[3] Hangs over Jericho's devoted towers,
And, like the storm o'er Sodom, redly lowers.

For the account of the destruction of Jericho, by the Jews, under the command of Joshua, see *Joshua* vi. particularly verse 20th, "So the people shouted, when the priests blew the trumpets; and it came to pass, when the people

heard the sound of the trumpets, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city."

[4] And cold and pale o'er Ajalon she hung.

Then spake Joshua to the Lord, in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, 'Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies.'—*Josh.* x. 12, 13.

[5] And builds on Libanus his humble shed.

Horeb et Sinai, le Carmel et le *Liban*, le torrent de Cedron, et la vallèe de Josaphat, redise encore la glorie de l'habitant de la cellule et de *l'anachorète du rocher.*—*Gènie du Christianisme, tom* iv. *p.* 48, *Lyons Edit.*

[6] But o'er his face his flowing mantle flings,
And hears a whisper from the King of Kings.

And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire, a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, what dost thou here, Elijah?—1 *Kings*, xix. 12—13.

[7] In what tremendous pomp Jehovah shone,
When on that mount he fixed his burning throne!

See the sublime account of the descent of God upon Mount Sinai.—*Exodus* xix. particularly from the 16th to the 19th verse, as also *Heb.* xii. 18—21.

[8] Even now, the heralds of his monarch tear
The son of Jesse from his fleecy care.

Wherfore Saul sent out messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep. And Jesse took an ass, laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul. And David came to Saul, and stood before him; and he loved him greatly, and he became his armour-bearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight. And it came to pass, that when the *evil* spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand; so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him....1 *Sam.* xvi. 19....23.

[9] The night was moonless: Judah's shepherds kept
Their starlight watch;—their flocks around them slept.

And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks, by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone about them. See the whole account, *Luke* ii. 8—15.

[10] Saw, in the stillness of a starry night,
The Swan and Eagle wing their silent flight.

To the reader, who is but superficially acquainted with astronomy, no explanatory note is here necessary. To others it is enough to observe, that the Swan, the Eagle, Berenicē's lock, Boötes, the Pleiades, the Lyre, and Auriga or the Charioteer, are the names of constellations, or the parts of constellations, visible in the northern hemisphere—of course in Palestine.—Cynosure is the classical name of the Pole-star.

[11] With thundering crash, are burst bolts, bars and locks;
Rent are their chains, and shivered are their stocks.

And when they had laid many stripes upon them, (Paul and Silas) they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely, who having received such a charge, thrust them into the prison, and made their feet fast in the *stocks*. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and *sang praises* unto God, and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.—*Acts*, xvi. 23—26.

[12] They cross the stream that bathes its foot, and dashes
Around the tomb where sleep a monarch's ashes.

The valley of Jehoshaphat is between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, on the east. Through this valley flows the brook Kedron, or Cedron: on the eastern bank of this river stands the tomb of Jehoshaphat.

[13]——————they pour the song of sorrow,
With their lov'd Lord,——————————

In this deeply interesting scene, I have taken the liberty of varying the *order* in which the events of the evening before the crucifixion occurred; in that I have supposed the hymn to be sung after crossing the Kedron, and ascending the mount of Olives....rather than in he supper chamber, as stated by Matthew. With this acknowledgment, I presume the *license* will be excused. I considered the scene thus laid, more poetical, and not less solemn or religious....See *Matth.* xxvi. 30, 31.

[14] Lights on the intrepid Jesuit's humble prow.

Let not the protestant reader be alarmed at seeing a Jesuit in company with Musick and Religion. I do assure him, it is a supposable case. I am not ignorant of the fact, that many accounts of the arts and ambition of this order of christians, have been given to the world, which are not the most favourable to the purity or disinterestedness of their piety; and I am well aware, that, if poetry and fiction are synonymous terms, there is but little poetry in too many of these accounts. But let the protestant reader recollect, that most of these views have been drawn by protestant pencils...."Let us lions be the painters," say the Jesuits, and we will shew you a very different picture. One of their pieces of coloured canvass I will lay before my readers, as well to shew that I do not think the above request unreasonable, as to explain what may want explanation, in this scene of my poem:

" Il restait encore, aux pieds des Cordilières, vers le côté qui regarde l' Atlantique, entre l' *Orénoque* et *Rio de la Plata*, un pays immense, rempli de Sauvages, où les Espagnols n'avaient point porté la dévastation. Ce fut dans ces épaisses forêts que les missionaires entreprirent de former une république chrétienne et de donner du moins à un petit nombre d'Indiens, le bonheur qu'ils n'avaient pu procurer à tous.

" Ils commencèrent par obtenir de la cour d'Espagne la liberté de tous les Sauvages qu'ils parviendraient à réunir. A cette nouvelle, les colons se soulevèrent ; ce ne fut qu'à force d'esprit et d'addresse que les Jésuites surprirent, pour ainsi dire, la permission de verser leur sang dans les forêts du Nouveau-Monde. Enfin, ayant triomphé de la cupidité et de la malice humaine; méditant un des plus nobles desseins qu'ait jamais concus un cœur d'homme, ils s'embarquèrent pour *Rio de la Plata.*

" C'est dans ce grand fleuve que vient se perdre cet autre fleuve, qui a donné son nom au pays et aux missions, dont nous retracons l'histoire. *Paraguay*, dans la langue des Sauvages, signifie le *Fleuve courronné*, parce qu'il prend sa source dans le lac *Xaruyès*, qui lui sert comme de couronne. Avant d'aller grossir Rio de la Plata, il recoit les eaux du *Parama* et de l'*Uraguay*. Des forêts qui renferment dans leur sein d'autres forêts tombées de vieillesse, des marais et des plaines entièrement inondées dans la saison des pluies, des montagnes qui élèvant des déserts, sur des déserts, forment une partie des vastes régions que le *Paraguay* arrose. Le gibier de toute espèce y abonde, ainsi que les tigres et les ours. Les bois sont remplis d'abeilles, qui font une cire fort blanche, et un miel très parfumé. On y voit des oiseaux d'un plumage éclatant, et qui ressemblent à de grandes fleurs

rouges et bleues, sur la verdure des arbres. Un missionnaire Francais, qui s'était égarè dans ces solitudes, en fait la peinture suivante.

" Je continuai ma route sans savoir à quel terme elle devait aboutir, et sans qu'il y eût personne qui pût me l'enseigner. Je trouvais quelquefois au milieu de ces bois des endroits enchantés. Tout ce que l'étude et l'industrie des hommes ont pu imaginer pour rendre un lieu agréable, n'approche point de ce que la simple nature y avait rassemblé de beautés.

" Ces lieux charmans me rappelèrent les idées que j'avais eues autrefois, en lisant les vies des anciens solitaires de la Thébaïde; il me vint en pensée de passer le reste de mes jours dans ces forêts où la Providence m'avait conduit, pour y vaquer uniquement à l'affaire de mon salut, loin de tout commerce avec les hommes; mais comme je n'étais pas le maître de ma destinée, et que les ordres du Seigneur m'étaient certainment marqués par ceux de mes supérieurs, je rejetai cette pensée comme une illusion."

" Les Indiens que l'on rencontrait dans ces retraites, ne leur ressemblaient que par le côté affreux. Race indolente, stupide et féroce, elle montrait dans toute sa laideur l'homme primitif dégradé par sa chute. Rien ne prouve davantage la dégénération de la nature humaine, que la petitesse du Sauvage, dans le grandeur du désert.

" Arrivés à *Buenos Ayrès*, les missionnaires remontèrent *Rio de la Plata*, et entrant dans les eaux du *Paraguay*, se dispersèrent dans ses bois sauvages. Les anciennes relations nous les représentent, un brèviaire sous le bras gauche, une grande croix à la main droite, et sans autre provision que leur confiance en Dieu. Ils nous les peignent, se faisant jour à travers les forêts, marchant dans

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des terres marécageuses où ils avaient de l'eau jusqu' à la ceinture, gravissant des roches escarpées, et furetant dans les antres et les précipices, au risque d'y trouver des serpens et des bêtes féroces, au lieu des hommes qu'ils y cherchaient.

" Plusieurs d'entr'eux y moururent de faim et de fatigues ; d'autres furent massacrés et dévorés par les Sauvages. Le père *Lizardi* fut trouvé percé de fléches sur un rocher ; son corps était à demi déchiré par les oiseaux de proie, et son bréviare était ouvert auprès de lui à l'office des Morts. Quand un missionnaire rencontrait ainsi les restes d'un de ses compagnons, il s'empressait de leur rendre les honneurs funèbres ; et plein d'une grande joie, il chantait un *Te Deum* solitaire sur le tombeau du Martyr.

De pareilles scènes, renouvelées à chaque instant, étonnaient les hordes barbares. Quelquefois elles s'arrêtaient autour du prêtre inconnu qui leur parlait de Dieu, et elles regardaient le ciel que l'apôtre leur montrait ; quelquefois elles le fuyaient comme un enchanteur, et se sentaient saisies d'une frayeur étrange : le Religieux les suivait en leur tendant les mains au nom de Jesus-Christ. S'il ne pouvait les arrêter, il plantait sa grande croix dans un lieu découvert, et s'allait cacher dans les bois. Les Sauvages s'approchaient peu á peu pour examiner l'etendard de paix, élevé dans la solitude ; un aimant secret semblait les attirer à ce signe de leur salut. Alors le missionnaire sortant tout-à-coup de son embuscade, et profitant de la surprise des Barbares, les invitait quitter une vie misérable pour jouir des douceurs de la société.

" Quand les Jésuites se furent attaché quelques Indiens, ils eurent recours à un autre moyen pour gagner des ames. Ils avaient remarqué que les Sauvages de ces bords étaient fort sensibles à la musique ; on dit même que les eaux du

Paraguay rendent la voix plus belle. Les missionnaires s'embarquèrent donc sur des pirogues avec les nouveaux catéchumènes ; ils remontèrent les fleuves, en chantant de saints cantiques. Les néophytes répétaient les airs, comme des oiseaux privés chantent pour attirer dans les rets de l'oiseleur les oiseaux sauvages. Les Indiens ne manquèrent point de se venir prendre au doux piége. Ils descendaient de leurs montagnes, et accouraient au bord des fleuves, pour mieux écouter ces accens. Plusieurs d'entr'eux se jetaient dans les ondes, et suivaient à la nage la nacelle enchantée. La lune, en répandant sa lumière mystérieuse sur ces scènes extraordinaires, achevait d'attendrir les cœurs. L'arc et la flèche échappaient à la main du Sauvage; l'avant-goût des vertus sociales, et les premières douceurs de de l'humanite, entraient dans son ame confuse. Il voyait sa femme et son enfant pleurer d'une joie inconnue; bientôt subjugué par un attrait irrésistible, il tombait au pied de la croix, et mêlait des torrens de larmes aux eaux régénératrices qui coulaient sur sa tête.

Ainsi la religion chrétienne réalisait dans les forêts de l'Amerique, ce que la fable raconte des Amphion et des Orphée : reflexion si naturelle, qu'elle s'est présentée même aux missionnaires ; tant il est certain qu'on ne dit ici que la vérité en ayant l'air de raconter une fiction."—*Chateaubriand, Génie du Christianisme, tom.* VIII. *chap.* IV. p. 40—48.

[15] Hear yon poetick pilgrim of the west,
Chant Musick's praise, and to her power attest.

Chateaubriand.—Perhaps I ought to apologize to this gentleman,—perhaps I owe the apology to the reader, for so frequently introducing him. The truth is, I find

him very useful. If the facts stated by him are adapted to my purpose, I have a right to use them; if the truth of his stories is questionable, his is the responsibility, not mine. I screen myself from blame, if

"I tell the tale as 'tis told to me."

This gentleman, it seems, has travelled through the United States, from the mouth of the Mississippi to the St. Lawrence. In Florida and the western States, he has laid the scene of his "Atala," an exquisite little assemblage of beauties and absurdities. This little poem, or rather episode, forms a part of his great work 'Génie du Christianisme,' or the Beauties of the Christian Religion. It has been translated separately, and will be read with pleasure by most lovers of polite literature. The allusions here to Atala may be briefly explained by observing, that Chactas, son of Outalissi, is the hero, and Atala the heroine of the poem—that Atala poisons herself rather than violate an oath of celibacy, imposed by little less than the legal *duress per minas;* and this act, upon which a coroner's inquest would return a verdict either of suicide, or insanity, is considered by our author as an unequivocal proof of her piety. The Florida scenery—the live oak, mantled in its loose mossy drapery—the laurel—the jessamine that hangs in graceful festoons over the waters—are all beautifully described, because the painting is from the life. His notice of the celebrated and wonderful *barrows*, or monumental *tumuli*, upon our western rivers, and his story of the serpent, charmed by the flute of the Canadian, will be seen in the passages here introduced from his work.

As to the story of the snake, what he says he *saw*, we may perhaps believe, particularly as accounts somewhat

similar are given by others. Besides, though M. de Chateaubriand certainly does tell tales, that occasionally happen to partake of the marvellous, I do not know that he has yet been publicly convicted of stating what is false, in regard to what has fallen under his own observation. There are those, indeed, who question his veracity even there—where he has nothing to do with saints or legends—and I must, for myself, confess that my own opinion of his veracity has been somewhat shaken, by a French gentleman, a general officer under Bonaparte, and for sometime a member of the National Institute, who tells me that he knows M. de Chateaubriand personally, though not *intimately*—for he claims to be a man of *honour*, and appears to be so—and that he knows him not only to be, but to have been, in the pay of the French police, as a *spy* upon his fellow-citizens—and that he therefore ought to be, and *is* universally despised. So much for the author of the *Génie du Christianisme*, *Martyrs*, *Travels*, *&c.* Here, then, follows a part of what I have made use of, remembering always that I am not writing *history*, but *poetry*.—Of the "Monumental mounds" he says:

"On a découvert depuis quelques années, dans l'Amérique septentrionale, des monumens extraordinaires sur les bords du Muskingum, du Miami, du Wabache, de l'Ohio, et sur-tout du Scioto, où ils occupent un espace de plus de vingt lieues en longueur. Ce sont des murs en terre avec des fossès, des glacis, des lunes, demi-lunes et de grands cônes qui servent de sépulcres. On a demandé, mais, sans succès, quel peuple a laissé de pareilles traces. L'homme est suspendu dans le présent, entre le passé et l'avenir, comme sur un rocher entre deux gouffres: derrière lui, devant lui, tout est ténèbres; à peine appercoit il quelques fantômes qui, remontant du fond des deux abymes,

surnagent un instant à leur surface, et s'y replongent pour jamais."

"Pour nous, amant solitaire de la nature, et simple confesseur de la Divinité nous nous sommes assis sur ces ruines. Voyageur sans renom, nous avons causé avec ces débris, comme nous-même ignorés. Les souvenirs confus des hommes, et les vagues rêveries du désert, se mêlaient au fond de notre âme. La nuit était au milieu de sa course; tout était muet, et la lune, et les bois, et les tombeaux. Seulement à longs intervalles on entendait la chute de quelque arbre, que la hache du temps abattait, dans la profondeur des forêts: ainsi tout tombe, tout s'anéantit."

"Enfin, ces monumens prennent leurs racines dans des jours beaucoup plus reculés que ceux où l'on a découvert l'Amérique. Nous avons vu sur ces ruines un chêne décrépit, qui avait poussé sur les débris d'un autre chêne tombé à ses pieds, et dont il ne restait plus que l'écorce; celui-ci à son tour s'etait élevé sur un troisième, et ce troisième, sur un quartrième. L'emplacement des deux derniers se marquait encore par l'intersection de deux cercles, d'un aubier rouge et pétrifié, qu'on découvrait à fleur de terre, en écartant un épais humus composé de feuilles et de mousses. Accordez suelement trois siecles de vie à ces quatre chênes successifs, et violà une epoque de douze cents années que la nature a gravée sur ces ruines."—*Genie du Christianisme, Tom.* i. pp. 212....215, 276....7.

As to the nature of the serpent generally, and his taste for Musick, in particular, this is the account of our author:

"Notre siècle rejette avec hauteur tout ce qui tient de la merveille: sciences, arts, morale, religion, tout reste désenchanté. Le serpent a souvent été l'objet de nos

observations; et si nous osons le dire, nous avons cru reconnaître en lui cet esprit pernicieux et cette subtilité que lui attribue l'Ecriture. Tout est mystérieux, caché, étonnant dans cet incompréhensible reptile. Ses mouvemens diffèrent de ceux de tous les autres animaux; on ne saurait dire où gît le principe de son déplacement, car il n'a ni nageoires, ni pieds, ni ailes; et cependant il fuit comme une ombre, il s'évanouit magiquement, il reparaît disparaît encore, semblable à une petite fumée d'azur, ou aux éclairs d'un glaive dans les ténèbres. Tantôt il se forme en cercle, et darde une langue de feu; tantôt, debout sur l'extrémité de sa queue, il marche dans une attitude perpendiculaire, comme par enchantement. Il se jette en orbe, monte et s'abaisse en spirale, roule ses anneaux comme une onde, circule sur les branches des arbres, glisse sous l'herbe des prairies, ou sur la surface des eaux. Ses couleurs sont aussi peu déterminées que sa marche; elles changent à tous les aspects de la lumière, et comme ses mouvemens, elles ont le faux brillant et les variétés trompeusee de la séduction.

" Plus étonnant encore dans le reste de ses mœurs, il sait, ainsi qu'un homme souillé de meutre, jeter à l'écart sa robe tachée de sang, dans la crainte d'être reconnu. Par une étrange faculté il peut faire rentrer dans son sein les petits monstres que l'amour en a fait sortir. Il sommeille des mois entiers, fréquente des tombeaux, habite des lieux inconnus, compose des poisons qui glacent, brûlent ou tachent le corps de sa victime des couleurs dont il est lui-même marqué. Là, il lève deux têtes; menacantes; ici, il fait entendre une sonnette; il siffle comme un aigle de montagne; il mugit comme un taureau. Il s'associe naturellement à toutes les idées morales ou religieuses, comme par une suite de l'influence qu'il eut sur

nos destinées: objet d'horreur ou d'adoration, les hommes ont pour lui une haine implacable, ou tombent devant son génie; le mensonge l'appelle, la prudence le réclame, l'envie le porte dans son cœur, et l'éloquence à son caducée; aux enfers il arme les fouets des furies, au ciel l'éternité en fait son symbole; il possède encore l'art de séduire l'innocence; ses regards enchantent les oiseaux dans les airs; et sous la fougère de la crêche, la brebis lui abandonne son lait. Mais il se laisse lui-même charmer par de doux sons; et pour le dompter, le berger n'a besoin que de sa flûte.

" Au mois de juillet 1791, nous voyagions dans le Haut-Canada, avec quelques familles sauvages de la nation des Onontagués. Un jour que nous étions arrêtés dans une grande plaine, au bord de la rivière Génésie, un serpent à sonnettes entra dans notre camp. Il y avait parmi nous un Canadien qui jouiat de la flûte; il voulut nous divertir, et s'avance contre le serpent, avec son arme d'une nouvelle espèce. A l'approche de son ennemi, le superbe reptile se forme en spirale, aplatit sa tête, enfle ses joues, contracte ses lèvres, découvre ses dents empoisonnées et sa gueule sanglante; sa double langue brandit comme deaux flammes; ses yeux charbons ardens; son corps, gonflé de rage, s'abaisse et s'élevé comme les soufflets d'une forge; sa peau dilatée devient terne et écailleuse; et sa queue, dont il sort un bruit sinistre, oscille avec tant de rapidité, qu'elle ressemble à une légère vapeur.

" Alors les Canadien commence à jouer sur sa flûte, le serpent fait un mouvement de surprise, et retire la tête en arriere. A mesure qu'il est frappé de l'effet magique, ses yeux perdent leur âpreté, les vibrations de sa queue se ralentissent, et le bruit qu'elle fait entendre, s'affaiblit et

meurt peu à peu. Moins perpendiculaires sur leur ligne spirale, les orbes du serpent charmé, par degrés s'élargissent, et viennent tour à tour se poser sur la terre en cercles concentriques. Les nuances d'azur, de verd, de blanc et d'or reprennent leur éclat sur sa peau frémissante, et tournant légérement la tête, il demeure immobile dans l' attitude de l'attention et du plaisir.

" Dans ce moment le Canadien marche quelques pas, en tirant de sa flûte des sons doux et monotones ; le reptile baisse son cou nuancé, entr'ouvre avec sa tête les herbes fines, et se met à ramper sur les traces du musicien qui l'entraîne, s'arrêtant lorsqu'il s'arrête, et recommencant á le suivre, quand il recommence á s'éloigner. Il fut ainsi conduit hors de notre camp, au milieu d'une foule de spectateurs tant Sauvages qu'Européens qui en croyaient a peine leurs yeux, à cette merveille de la mélodie : il n'y eut qu'une seule voix dans l'assemblée, pour qu'on laissât le merveilleux serpent s'échapper."

Ibid. pp. 174—179.

[16] Now, he recalls the lamentable wail,
That pierc'd the shade of Rama's palmy vale,
See *Matthew*, ii. 16—18.

[17] That Mighty Spirit once from Teman came :
Clouds were his chariot, and his coursers flame.

God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran, &c.—See *Habak.* iii. 3—17.

[18] Thou didst descend, and, rolling through the croud,
Inshrine think ark and altar in thy shroud,
And fill the temple with thy mantling cloud.

And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, (for all the priests that were present were sanctified, and did not then wait by course: Also the Levites, which were the singers; all of them of Asaph of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren; being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries, and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests, sounding with trumpets:) It came to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and instruments of musick, and praised the Lord, saying—For he is good, for his mercy endureth forever; and then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God.—2 *Chron.* v. 11....14.

[19] It was originally intended that the recitation of this poem should form a part of the performances of an evening concert of sacred musick for charitable purposes.

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